

Le Matin

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Le Matin

by [celestialcello](#)

Summary

Like the end of all great stories, another morning always arrives.

Original prompt list from tarmasz (<https://www.instagram.com/tarmasz/?hl=en>) on Instagram!

Notes

See the end of the work for [notes](#)

~*~

The Great Red Dragon was magnificent in its final hour. Its furious, soundless bellow vibrated throughout the realm underneath the firmament, enough to raise a fiery, roaring ocean from where the Earth gaped open. Its wings darker than the heart of forest.

May those who slay the Beast fall with it - the origin of chaos, the end to passages into long hours of the winter's cruel dreams.

May those who slay the Beast fall with it, abide forever in its first and final ascension.

And so they fall in a lover's brace, shared breath and heartbeat, and -

His eyes flared open in a desperate gasp, like a suffocated whale surfacing for air after an eternity beneath the water. Then there was the steady cradle of waves against the hull. It took him a moment to register his new surrounding: a modestly refurbished low-ceiling cabin in the reclusive depth of a boat. Beneath his palm the bedsheet was still warm from the last few hours he had spent on it, distinct from the void of rushing wind or the rocky, damp height at the edge of the cliff.

The first thing Will felt was the sharp reminder of the cut on his cheek, throbbing and burning, leaving behind in its wake an uncomfortable sense of swelling flesh. He ventured to touch the array of neat stitches and hissed at the renewed pain. *This was a bad idea*, he decided in the haze of morphine and a variety of antibiotics he and Hannibal had both consumed to salvage their lives as they limped their way back inside the house in the bloody aftermath.

He remembered the wet sound of digging out the bullet from deep under Hannibal's skin, gushes of crimson blood, the involuntary twitch of the surrounding muscles, the other man's steady voice and occasional groaning as he guided Will through the process of a minor surgery, anaesthetised by the rush of adrenaline and blood-loss. He remembered the bitter taste as the iodine solution Hannibal used to sanitise the puncture on his cheek seeped into his mouth, an eerie and unpleasant feeling even as his mind was living the moment of the Dragon's fall in a seamless cycle, weaving every single traces of colour and scent into a grotesque yet awe-inspiring tapestry, lightened by the frozen radiance of constellations, sang by the roiling, rejoicing Atlantic.

'Stay with me, Will. It should be finished soon.' The voice was distant yet utterly familiar, conjuring up inside his heaving chest a motley of feelings.

'The Gordian knot - an impossible riddle with a brutal solution.'

'Many among us have resolved to extremes in pursuit of ideal.'

'What is this ideal? Are you seeing it?'

'I am.'

'Good. Tell me later.'

'I will wait as long as you would listen. We have been listening to each other for a long time, do you agree?'

'For too long, but never enough time to figure out the words except for the hint of prosody and rhythm.'

'Until now.'

A soft knock dispelled the vision. He was back in the stifling shadow drifting in in the vast of a nameless sea. With a twist of the knob, the door to his quarter opened, revealing the tall, slightly enervated figure of one of the many imageries from his reminiscence of night. In all the years Will had known him, Hannibal had never looked vulnerable - not the night of truth in his kitchen, not when he reached for the downpour of light from his glass prison, not when Will deliberately drove words sharp as blade through the thin barrier of his uniform.

Perhaps it was something about the appearance - a white cotton shirt masking the wounds both new and old, completed with a pair of grey shorts; a few strands of hair fell across his forehead, sheltering the unreadable look in those eyes.

He was pale, both from years spent underground and the receding fever on account of the severity of his injury. There was something melancholic about him in the breaking daylight that was both insubstantial yet heavy at the same time.

Will frowned, tried to speak as he pushed himself up before being interrupted, much to his dismay.

'I thought we could have porridge for breakfast. Do you prefer coffee or tea to go with it?'

'Coffee, even if I guess it's bad for convalescence. But give me a minute - let me give you a hand once I'm done brushing my teeth.'

Hannibal was, for some reason, genuinely surprised by this simple offer, perhaps more by the familiarity in Will's casual tone and lack of resistance. 'Thanks for the offer, Will. It should be manageable even with just one pair of hands - I'm a quite apt cook as it happens to be.' He watched Hannibal trying to smile but failed, his slender fingers traced the knob restlessly.

They fled into the silent embrace of the night air - the darkest hour before morning set the sea alight. Both of them were carrying the bare necessity of supplies with them down the eroded stairs hidden along the cliff wall, built by the pirates and smugglers centuries ago.

'You seem confident these would last for long enough.' Will whispered, lowering his voice out of an instinctual feeling that unwanted company has already arrived at the deserted haven.

'The beauty of culinary art is such that even the basest of ingredients could be redeemed and transformed by skills and sheer will.'

'Do shut up, Hannibal. This is not the time.'

In the darkness Hannibal chuckled, and inexplicably Will wanted to laugh with him.

‘Hey, do you mind help me get up? My shoulder is...’ Before he could finish, Hannibal wordlessly made his way through the short distance between them. As he bent down to reach for Will’s hand, Will set his right palm softly on the man's chin and pulled him down into a brief kiss that startled them both but then blurred into something akin to repentance and acceptance.

‘Let’s eat on the deck.’

‘Of course.’

End Notes

Thanks for reading 

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